



California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

Docket #: R.18-12-005

CPUC TO FURTHER EXAMINE ELECTRIC UTILITY DE-ENERGIZATION

SAN FRANCISCO, December 13, 2018 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), in its ongoing commitment to mitigate utility involvement in wildfires, today launched a new effort to further examine its rules allowing electric utility de-energization of power lines during severe wildfire threat conditions as a preventative measure of last resort.

California is experiencing an increase in wildfire events due to several factors, including climate change. Through the proceeding opened today, the CPUC will examine how de-energization has affected the state so far and will refine the de-energization practice to ensure public safety while minimizing unintended consequences.

“The de-energization model deployed by San Diego Gas & Electric has proven to be successful because it has deployed several tools to better identify the electric lines that should be de-energized. We should work to further learn from this model and how it can be effectively applied to the rest of California. Due to regional variability, there is no one-size-fits-all approach, so we will need to continue to learn from and adjust our efforts on this front. The proceeding we opened today presents an opportunity for all stakeholders involved to better develop practices that fit their communities,” said CPUC President Michael Picker.

The proceeding will focus on the following issues:

- Examining conditions in which proactive and planned de-energization is practiced;
- Developing best practices and ensuring an orderly and effective set of criteria for evaluating de-energization programs;



- Ensuring electric utilities coordinate with state and local level first responders, and align their systems with the Standardized Emergency Management System framework (SEMS);
- Mitigating the impact of de-energization on vulnerable populations;
- Examining whether there are ways to reduce the need for de-energization;
- Ensuring effective notice to affected stakeholders of possible de-energization and follow-up notice of actual de-energization; and,
- Ensuring consistency in notice and reporting of de-energization events.

Electric utilities have in the past used the option of proactively shutting down power to specific power lines to limit the impact or damage of these lines to communities in dangerous conditions. However, the CPUC acknowledges that de-energization can leave communities and essential facilities without power, which brings risk and hardship for vulnerable populations.

The CPUC invites the input of all stakeholders in examining the de-energization guidelines.

The utilities that are required to participate in the proceeding are Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas & Electric, Liberty Utilities/CalPeco Electric, Bear Valley Electric Service, and Pacific Power.

With a change in the increased severity and frequency of wildfires in California, it is important to address the potential impacts of utility de-energization practices. The outcome of this proceeding may shape utilities’ wildfire mitigation plans in future years.

“We will continue to draw upon the expertise of agencies like CalOES and CAL FIRE as we initiate a careful examination of impacts on communities, and identify ways to mitigate those impacts,” said Commissioner Clifford Rechtschaffen.

The proposal voted on is available at:

<http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M245/K791/245791401.PDF>.

The CPUC is holding public workshops in northern and southern California to address potential impacts of utility de-energization practices, as follows:



Northern California

What: Workshop on Impacts from De-Energization: Focus on Vulnerable Populations

When: December 14, 2018, 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Where: Santa Rosa Veteran’s Memorial Building, Lodge Room, 1351 Maple Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Remote Access: WebEx: <https://bit.ly/2KdtB61>, meeting number 710 613 992, password: Mitigation; Listen-only call-in number 1-877-820-7831, access code 479881

Southern California

What: Workshop on Impacts from De-Energization: Focus on First Responders and Local Government

When: January 9, 2019, 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Where: Calabasas Founders Hall, 100 Civic Center Way, Calabasas, CA 91302

Remote Access: WebEx: <https://bit.ly/2RU9Oef>, meeting number 717 534 465, password: Mitigation; Listen-only call-in number 1-877-820-7831, access code 479881

View the agenda, and more information on de-energization, at www.cpuc.ca.gov/deenergization.

The CPUC regulates services and utilities, safeguards the environment, and assures Californians’ access to safe and reliable utility infrastructure and services. For more information on the CPUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

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